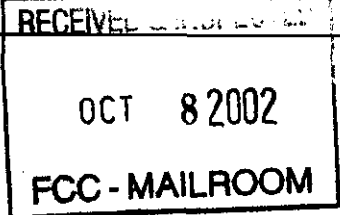




American Council of the Blind

October 3, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-B-204
Washington, DC 20554



Re: **WC Docket No. 02-~~2357~~307**
Joint Application by BellSouth Corporation for Authorization under Section 271 of the Communications Act to Provide In-Region, Interlata Service in the States of Florida and Tennessee

Dear Secretary Dortch:

The American Council of the Blind is pleased to submit comments in support of BellSouth's filing requesting FCC authorization to provide in-region, interLATA services in Florida and Tennessee. We believe that all Florida and Tennessee residents, including those with disabilities, will benefit from BellSouth's entry in these long distance markets.

As we have seen in other states where Bell companies have entered the long distance market, increased competition has brought consumers numerous benefits including greater choice, convenience, lower prices and increased infrastructure investment for the deployment of advanced technologies. For example, more competition has led to a greater number of pricing plans and lower overall costs for consumers. Such savings are very important to Americans with disabilities, as many tend to be on fixed or limited incomes.

We anticipate that BellSouth's long distance entry will also lead to additional investment in and deployment of advanced telecommunications services. These services can significantly enhance the lives of Americans with disabilities by providing life-long learning opportunities, increasing the quality of health care, promoting independent living and reducing isolation.

We are confident that BellSouth's entrance into the Florida and Tennessee long distance markets will strengthen its commitment to making communications technologies available, affordable and accessible to Americans with disabilities. We, therefore, urge the FCC to approve BellSouth's application to provide long distance service in these states.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles H. Crawford".

Charles H. Crawford
Executive Director

Noted/Classified
List ACB 2002